

Second, we should make sure that there are resources available to research gun violence—research. We can't find effective solutions if we can't research and understand the problem.

Lastly, we should enhance the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, NICS, and make sure that States are inputting records in a way that allows Federal agencies to run complete background checks on individuals. Background checks are only as effective as the quality of the records in the background check system.

There is no excuse for making it easy for dangerous people to get their hands on a deadly weapon. It is my deepest hope that this Congress will take action on gun control so that none of us has to attend another vigil in Pomona—or anywhere else in America—to honor the memory of another child taken from us much too soon. We owe it to the victims and to their loved ones to act.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only to celebrate African American History Month, but to celebrate two stories lost to mainstream history. The first story is the original Underground Railroad, and the other story is of Josiah T. Walls.

Students across the country have heard stories about the Underground Railroad during the Antebellum Period; however, there was a Road to Freedom that existed before the United States was even established, and that road went south to the free territory of Spanish Florida. In fact, the National Park Service held its sixth annual Underground Railroad Conference in St. Augustine in 2012 to highlight this very story which started with eight recorded families seeking freedom in 1608 in Florida.

During this period, thousands of men, women, and children fled from the colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. These individuals headed to Florida to gain their freedom thanks to the Edict of 1693, which was issued by the then-Spanish Government that stated that any man, woman, or child who found their way to Spanish Florida would be granted freedom.

The people at the heart of this story are the Gullah Geechee who trace their lineage to West Africa. Once free in Florida, the Gullah Geechee people thrived, establishing communities, forts, and deep roots throughout Florida's Third Congressional District, roots that still can be felt today.

The second story is of Josiah T. Walls. He was a man who was born into slavery in 1842 in Virginia. He worked as a slave. The Civil War broke out,

and he was conscripted by the Confederate Army to serve as a cook in the Civil War. He got freed by the Union soldiers, served with the Union soldiers, and after the war, he moved to Florida to fight in the Seminole American wars. During that time period, the war ended, and he moved to Gainesville, Florida, where he became the first African-American mayor of our city where I come from.

During that time, he became a very successful businessperson. He was elected to the Florida Assembly, and then later he was elected to the U.S. Congress, serving in this very body here today. His elections got challenged, and he lost his role as a Representative in the House. He ran again the next year, won again, and served a full term. Then the third term he ran, he won again. His election got challenged by a Confederate soldier, and he lost his seat.

He went on to become a prominent businessman in north central Florida, owned a farm, and was very successful until the freeze of 1906, which put him out of business. He moved to Tallahassee and became a newspaper owner and printed a local newspaper.

He rose to prominence, but at his death, he was but a footnote in the histories not just of our State, but of our country. Here is a man that was born into slavery, rose to prominence, and was forgotten by history.

I tell these stories because these stories, like many stories in our early history, must never be forgotten and must be remembered by our history lest we repeat it. It must also be taught to our children so that they are inspired and they see themselves in the history books like these other folks.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Harvey Klee, American Legion National Chaplain, Bluffton, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we thank You when heroic leadership has been undertaken in this House during times of crises, for their labor well into the night, for efforts to seek compromise where compromise is warranted, and for creative solutions proposed and acted upon in the best interests of the American people.

May unity prevail even when parties are in conflict. When progress is impeded and negotiations break down, grant them fresh ideas for discussion and ultimate resolution.

May all Members of this House remain faithful to the oath of office they have taken as Representatives of "We the people . . ." and may political ideologies be tempered by intellectual honesty.

Lord, bless this land we love so much and save us from our own self-inflicted wounds.

This we pray in the name of all that is holy.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ENGEL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN HARVEY KLEE

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine who is here with us today. Chaplain Harvey H. Klee, a resident of Llano, Texas, joins us today as the national chaplain of the American Legion.

We just heard Chaplain Klee give a beautiful invocation, calling for us all to be unified in our actions, with the best interest of the American people at heart. Chaplain Klee has dedicated himself to living by those words, serving our Nation and its people in many ways.

Chaplain Klee served in the Navy during the Korean war and later worked as a missionary helping drug addicts and designing training programs for inmates at a prison in California.

Later, he founded the Texas Chaplains Association, and has been appointed Texas Department Chaplain nine times, which is more times than any other chaplain in the history of the department.

Chaplain Klee, thank you for joining us today and reminding us of the great power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

WELCOMING DR. MONA HANNA-ATTISHA TO THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to have Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the daughter of Iraqi-American scientists, the physician who helped expose the Flint water crisis, as my guest at the joint session and the address by the President tonight.

Simply put, Dr. Mona, as her patients call her, is a hero. Her persistence exposed a terrible manmade crisis that poisoned my hometown, and she has been an incredible partner in the fight for resources to help fix the problems in Flint. Her personal story of coming to America from Iraq reminds us of the many important contributions that immigrants make.

In Donald Trump's world, though, Dr. Mona may not have been there for Flint kids. She is an Iraqi immigrant. In Donald Trump's world, she would actually have been turned away. She would not have been the hero to thousands of Flint families.

She is the epitome of what makes America great and what it means to be an American citizen. She stood up for what was right. She exposed the facts in Flint, Michigan. In the face of bullying, she spoke truth to power, and she persisted. She is a hero. She is what makes this country great. She is what is good about the United States of America—an immigrant to this country who stood for the people of my hometown.

She is a message, and her presence here today is intended to send a message to the President of the United States and to the rest of the country that that is what makes America great. She adds to the fabric of this country, and I am grateful to have her here today.

REVOKE PASSPORTS OF THOSE WHO JOIN FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over 260 Americans have traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight for known foreign terrorist organizations. When they return back to America, they are not coming back to open up coffee shops. They are coming back to do mischief against us.

The most important job of government is to protect the citizens. That is why my colleague, BILL KEATING, and I

have introduced the Foreign Terrorist Organization Passport Revocation Act. It directs the Secretary of State to revoke passports of those Americans who have joined foreign terrorist organizations. They are still citizens, but they cannot travel back to the United States or to any other country. The only way they come back to the United States is under arrest by law enforcement in handcuffs.

This is a bipartisan bill that will stop these Benedict Arnolds from coming back at all. If someone takes arms up with our enemies, that person deserves to be treated like an enemy.

And that is just the way it is.

WELCOMING BRUCE BAILLIE TO THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, when you come in to Bremerton, Washington, on the ferry, you see one of my favorite sights. It is Building 460 of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, and it says on the side of the building: "Puget Sound Naval Shipyard Building on a Proud Tradition." Puget Sound Naval Shipyard is far and away the largest employer in the region I represent, and these are men and women who take great pride in their work and have done so for over 125 years.

They are also critical to the success of our Navy's national security mission, but too often in this town, they don't get the respect they deserve. That is why my guest this evening is Bruce Baillie with the Bremerton Building and Metal Trades Council. Bruce is a local leader for our shipyard workers, and I want to make sure that this new administration understands how important this workforce is to our country.

These are not just talented professionals. They have been amazing partners in putting together an action agenda for shipyard workers that we introduced last week: exempting our shipyard workers from the hiring freeze which is critical to our Nation's security, making sure that retired servicemembers—our veterans—are able to secure jobs in our Defense Department, and halting policies that lower the compensation of defense workers—changes in per diem and overtime policies that affect their take-home pay.

It is important that we have the backs of these vital workers, and that is why I have invited Bruce Baillie as my guest this evening.

RARE DISEASE WEEK ON CAPITOL HILL

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week marks Rare

Disease Week on the Hill. Many Members of this House will meet with patients, caregivers, physicians, family members, and advocates from across the country about how their lives are impacted by disease.

The National Institutes of Health considers a disease rare if it affects fewer than 200,000 people across the United States. Many times the disease is accompanied by uncommon or mismatched symptoms that make diagnosing the illness difficult, and many times such illnesses are without a cure.

Mr. Speaker, before I came to Congress, I was a healthcare professional, and I have seen firsthand how devastating a disease or injury can be to an individual and to families.

I welcome the rare disease community to Washington this week, and I look forward to meeting with Representatives from the Fifth District of Pennsylvania, including Tom Weiser, James and Jean Rickard from Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

Education can help shape healthcare policy, Mr. Speaker, to better meet the needs of the rare disease community, and I am pleased to be a part of that conversation.

DONALD TRUMP AND VLADIMIR PUTIN

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last week I hosted a dozen of constituent events in my district. At every turn, families asked the same question: When will Congress investigate the President's involvement with Russia?

I have received many calls and e-mails about Russia for weeks. The American people are deeply and rightly concerned with this administration's involvement with the Putin regime. We know the President's hand-picked national security adviser was forced to resign over his communications with Russia. We know that if Moscow did indeed influence our free elections, we have a duty to stand up against those threats and not sweep them under the rug.

We do not support Putin's human rights record, his treatment of journalists, or his invasions of Georgia and Ukraine, where my grandmother was born.

So why is the people's House protecting Vladimir Putin? Why are we not standing up to President Trump and investigating his dealings with the Putin regime? What are we afraid of?

To my colleagues on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, what are you afraid we will find out if we investigate?

Mr. Speaker, when are we going to get answers for the American people?

Lastly, I welcome Chicago WVON's Matt McGill and Planned Parenthood's Donna Miller to tonight's joint session.